ASD Policymakers and Stakeholders Urge Integrated State Policies for Individuals with Disabilities Across the Lifespan

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INTRODUCTION

➤ The Autism Tsunami is the growing number of ASD diagnoses world-wide (Goehner, 2012)

➤ Advocacy includes self-advocates/family members in research & policy (Singh, 2016; Hacking, 1999)

➤ The Autism Tsunami and novel advocacy approach may produce an autism policy shift that integrates diverse disabilities (Levin, 2017)

Purpose:

To explore participants' visions of good ASD/disability policy, their concerns about the autism tsunami, and the limitations of the current systems of supports

METHOD

A qualitative, ethnographic case study using:

➤ Document review

➤ Individual interviews (20 participants, each from one of the seven ASD institutions)

➤ Observations (four public meetings)

➤ Field notes and researcher journal

➤ Follow-up member checks (10 participants)

➤ Thematic analysis (Dedoose online analytical tool)

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

1. **The Gap**
   - No service system for adults not on waivers
   - No adult employment services post-transition

2. **Dreams of Good Policy**
   - Comprehensive ASD/disability policy
   - Policy addressing inclusion in society

3. **Shifting the Infrastructure**
   - Building capacity statewide
   - Transition/adult taskforces
   - Align state goals with federal mandates

4. **Access to Citizenship**
   - Responsibilities of the civil society
   - Rights and privileges of adults

IMPLICATIONS

Policy requirements:

➤ Comprehensive transition planning for **ALL**

➤ Address the **lost generation** of adults who are un-and under-employed

➤ Respect rights to dignity of risk; meaningful, remunerative employment; and freedom to choose living arrangements, recreation, and relationships

CONCLUSION

This movement from dreams of good policy for people with ASD toward good policy for people with disability in general, and finally toward access for everyone who does not currently enjoy the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, describes movement into "the big tent of us" that informants are working to achieve. What began as a set of limited and practical goals for ASD policy could be transformed into a paradigm shift for an inclusive and comprehensive disability policy in New Mexico.

SOURCES

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